Career Path

'Can-do' attitude drives determined achiever to the top

by Jacky Wong

Pink Yuen, chief operating officer, Modern Beauty Salon Holdings Limited
Photo: Wallace Chan

Behind the glamorous face of the beauty industry exist enormous opportunities for those who possess what it takes to shine and outshine.

Pink Yuen started her career as a receptionist and is now chief operating officer of Modern Beauty Salon Holdings Limited, one of the most prestigious beauty parlours in town. Her story is the very essence of challenge and achievement — an endearing but tough and ambitious young woman climbs her way to the top of the beauty industry.

As a young school-leaver, Ms Yuen was interested in cosmetics and determined to make the beauty industry her lifelong career. Joining Modern Beauty, she came to realise that the job of a successful beauty consultant entails much more than meets the eye.

An essential part of the job, in fact, was to make and maintain personal connections with the clients. "A good client refers colleagues, and an entire family of business clients can be born out of this personalised service relationship," she remarks.

With an extensive client base and a "can-do" attitude, Ms Yuen's potential soon surfaced and in 2006, at age 31, she became chief operating officer and executive director of the company with greater responsibilities in managing overall sales and marketing strategies, overseeing the daily operation of service centres and developing and conducting in-house training.

It is demanding work and Ms Yuen uses a number of strategies to cope with it. "When you're a junior staff, you must grasp every opportunity to learn from your boss' strengths and mistakes," she says. "As a supervisor, you should view issues from your employees' point of view and be open-minded in accepting opinions. Don't ever expect staff to accept your viewpoint entirely. Let them challenge you, otherwise you may need to face up to unexpected outcomes."

Regarding people management, her philosophy is to place people in the right positions and develop their potential to the fullest. "We must identify and respect individuals' strengths and find the best possible ways to further develop them. If you place your staff in the right positions, they will naturally become the company's assets," she stresses.

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Delegation of authority to subordinates is also an art to be mastered, Ms Yuen emphasises. However, when authority is given to others, employers have to be prepared to accept the possibility of mixed results, she adds.

Now a key player in the company's business, Ms Yuen must be accountable to all the stakeholders and it is her job to meet the challenges that the company faces while simultaneously managing staff expectations.

Looking back at a successful 14-year career, Ms Yuen is grateful to her mentors who motivated and

helped her become a determined and clear-minded individual. She notes that a successful industry practitioner should be independent enough to accept hard work, have a positive mindset and a committed work attitude. "One must also take initiatives to make things work," she says.

Ms Yuen is pleased that attitudes towards the beauty industry have shifted and the opportunities in the field are attracting people who possess not only solid academic qualifications but also a true passion. "The market will continue to create demand for both frontline and management staff. Aspirants who are willing to learn and show determination will definitely see the beauty in the industry," she concludes.

China Opportunities

Modern Beauty Salon Holdings is well established in Hong Kong and is now setting its sights on the buzzing mainland beauty market. Over the next two years there will be management opportunities for Hong Kong staff with the opening of 20 spa and beauty centres in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou. To keep pace with this expansion, more beauty consultants and management staff will be required.

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